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BALLET TODAY

MARCH 1952

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE sudden disappearance of the Ballet Russe, as well as other disquieting reports which reach of present-day ballet attendances both in London and on tour, seem to suggest that while ballet is not "finished", as some critics have claimed recently, the days of the war and post-war ballet boom are over. Two of the reasons for this are no doubt the shortage of money to spend and the general low or adventurous artistic standards of much of our ballet today. The end of the boom will, as usual, be hardest those who can least afford it—the dancers. Yet, this consideration apart, perhaps some good will come out of the evil if the surviving companies are forced to pull their socks up and once more make close contact with their audiences.

Yet this is not the whole story. A letter from a reader, Mrs. Lucia Lindsay, of Stockton-on-Tees, complains bitterly of the lack of touring ballet companies; her letter is typical of several which reach me. It looks as though the touring companies might well to enlarge their choice of towns to visit. There are, no doubt, all sorts of difficulties, particularly in finding suitable theatres; but some cities, particularly London, have far more than their fair share.

I am probably expressing the feeling of many of our readers when I suggest that both Wells Companies should spend more of their time touring in this country, whatever the profitable delights of long tours overseas.

It is not the business of *Ballet Today* to review opera, but I must take advantage of this opportunity to praise unreservedly the Covent Garden production of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*. Not the least disturbing feature of that unforgettable first night was the discovery that, when necessary, the Royal Opera House

can put on a magnificent job of staging, lighting, production and music, worthy at last of an international opera house.

Why should not the same care and attention be paid to all that aspect of the ballet? The staging of the classics is usually flat and uninteresting; some of the new works, like *Ballabile* for example, start off well in this respect but begin to look ragged later.

It may well be that the lack of care and attention to the presentation of ballet as a stage spectacle, is partly responsible for the noticeable decrease in audience numbers and enthusiasm.

I am taking this chance to review Cecil Bates' first ballet, *The Ballad of Clerk Saunders*, which had its premiere at Ballet Workshop too late for inclusion in the main body of this issue.

Without being in any way outstanding, it had the merits of telling its story straightforwardly (though the story on the stage bore little relation to the information contained in the programme), of making some attempt at characterisation, and of creating some interesting *pas de deux*, which were well danced by Michel de Lutry and Rachel Cameron.

Presumably to stress the mediaeval atmosphere, the characters were heavily made-up with black lines and bedaubed costumes. I began to wish *someone's* mother had used Persil! The music, specially written by Iain Hamilton, was so strong in its own right as to attract too much attention. I fancy the choreographer will learn much from his first production—this, after all, is one of the reasons for the existence of Ballet Workshop—and I expect his next ballet to be a great advance.

But, once again, I am astonished by the timidity of our young choreographers. In *my* day, you were revolutionary and iconoclastic in your youth, even if you later grew into respectability. Nowadays, the process seems to be reversed, if it is taking place at all.

F.J.

Paul Wilson's cover photograph is of the French mime Marcel Marceau in two of his enchanting studies.

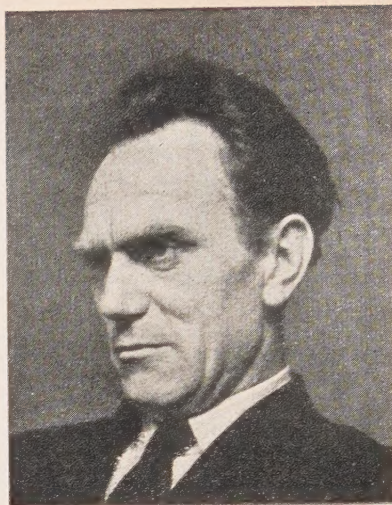
NEXT MONTH

We hope to present our next issue in a new and slightly larger format, with a new cover designed by Associate Editor Peter Revitt. Contributors to this bumper number will include A. V. Coton, Alan Storey, L. J. H. Bradley and Ivor Guest, and the number will contain four exclusive photographs by Paul Wilson, our staff photographer, in addition to other features and photographs.

The price is still one shilling.

FOR WHOM TOLLS THE BELL?

by A. V. COTON



WRITING in the *News Chronicle* of January 9th, Tyrone Guthrie—actor, producer, first master of radio drama, administrator, playwright—gave his views on the present and future states of Ballet in this country. His estimate was that Ballet has said all it can for our time and that a swing of fashion (which *must* come anyway) will probably lead to the dominance of a kind of opera: not the rather sad splendours of 19th century Grand Opera, but an artistically conceived, well-planned and creatively-written musical entertainment. Sooner or later, we in Britain must make our own kind of *Brigadoon*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Allegro*, *Oklahoma!* A statement of this weight, coming from a man whose views command both respect and attention, must be taken with some seriousness by the Dance department of the contemporary English Theatre. Does Mr. Guthrie's article indicate a dissatisfaction with ballet from professional theatre folk, or is the antipathy more widespread? Is there growing a wide disapproval of ballet amongst many kinds of people who care for the theatre; people who value the theatre as one whole kind of art and have never been interested in the particularities and peculiarities of theatre dancing?

So many of us, in all our experience of the arts, tend to accept pictures, poems, plays, sonatas, as special manifestations which (in a highly personal way) belong to us: we lack any instinctual feeling for history and only very rarely attempt to see the work of art in its true perspective, i.e., as a thing made in a certain town, in a given year, by such-and-such a poet, sculptor, composer, choreographer, playwright. If we try to assess the deeper meaning (or implication, or suggestiveness or whatever we

like to call it) of the work of art, we do so only when we begin to take into account who created it. . . . It follows that once we get interested in "who", we cannot help finding out something about the why of each particular work of art. Mr. Guthrie short-circuits the (yet unwritten) history of 20th century ballet in England by pointing out that, though the impact of the Diaghilev Ballet was immense, that impact has long lost its dynamic force. There can be no more Bakstian fabric designs, no new Picas-soid-cubist upholsteries and linoleums, for what was "daringly novel", "advanced", "the newest mode" in 1913 began its journey down the social spiral in 1913: today the dehydrated (but still discernible) colour-combinations and stylised patterns that were found in Mayfair before, during and after the 1914-18 war are to be seen on the curtainings, carpetings and dress materials of the most modest proletarian home. Similarly, the Russian music which was so "strange", "barbaric" before the 1914 war has become practically the staple of Prom. and B.B.C. Light programmes.

This process goes on throughout the history of all—or nearly all—European arts: the only kinds of art which escape this devitalising process are those which can never be marketed in enough quantity to make someone a fortune. A new vitality in any art form is accepted by, at first, *only* artists, connoisseurs and critics; if it is a strong vitality it then appeals to a middlebrow public, but only after a literature of comment and assessment by second-rate critics have over-simplified its innate qualities, i.e., after it has been shown to a middlebrow public as easy to digest and bearing some sort of message or special reward. After this, it may pass along to

lower cultural level, but in order to be "sold" to the newest, and widest, public, it is produced or reproduced or leavened with extraneous matter to such state that it has become a weak or vulgarised or merely imitation form of the art-work which was such a splendid revelation twenty or thirty years ago. It can be shown by analysis of series of events in the history of European arts that this process almost always requires just twenty-five years; the descent from novel and vigorous experimental work by original creative artists, to the lowest kind of popularisation occurs inside one generation).

By emphasising the fact that popular taste finds acceptable what ten years ago the middlebrow admired, and what fifteen or twenty years before then was something known only to a public with special taste, Mr. Guthrie underlines the fact that the impact of Diaghilev is now spent. The fruit which sprang from the tree he planted has, by now, been all consumed; if that tree has scattered seeds which are even now growing into other trees, we may feel that the Diaghilev reformation of ballet in our century will be a lasting benefit. The entire case implied or stated in Guthrie's contention (i.e., the ballet has "said" all that it can; that it has had an influence on the rest of the theatre, but that that influence is now spent; that a shift of balance must come; that the next fashion will be for a form of theatre away from dancing) can, I think, be dealt with in half-a-dozen questions relative to what has been happening in recent years.

The questions implicit in our study of Guthrie's remarks are, in my estimation, as follows: Have we used well the heritage of Diaghilev or have we squandered it? (by "heritage" meaning the standard of choice, novelty of idea, quality of talent employed, during his regime). Does the average performance of ballet give a real—or a false—satisfaction to the greater part of its audience? Are the best (i.e., most daring, most flexible, most far-seeing) personalities guiding present-day developments in England? Is it observable that the general quality of performances complies with the standard set during the Diaghilev era? Finally, is there any one single factor which ought to be present in ballet-making that is obviously missing?

Each of these questions could, of course, provide material for a 5,000 word essay; my brief answers rest upon what I interpret as the good and the bad factors in present-day ballet, and my guesses about the future are no worse and no better than the guesswork of any other observer who has watched for as long.

We could not have launched English ballet after Diaghilev's death unless we either got as much back-

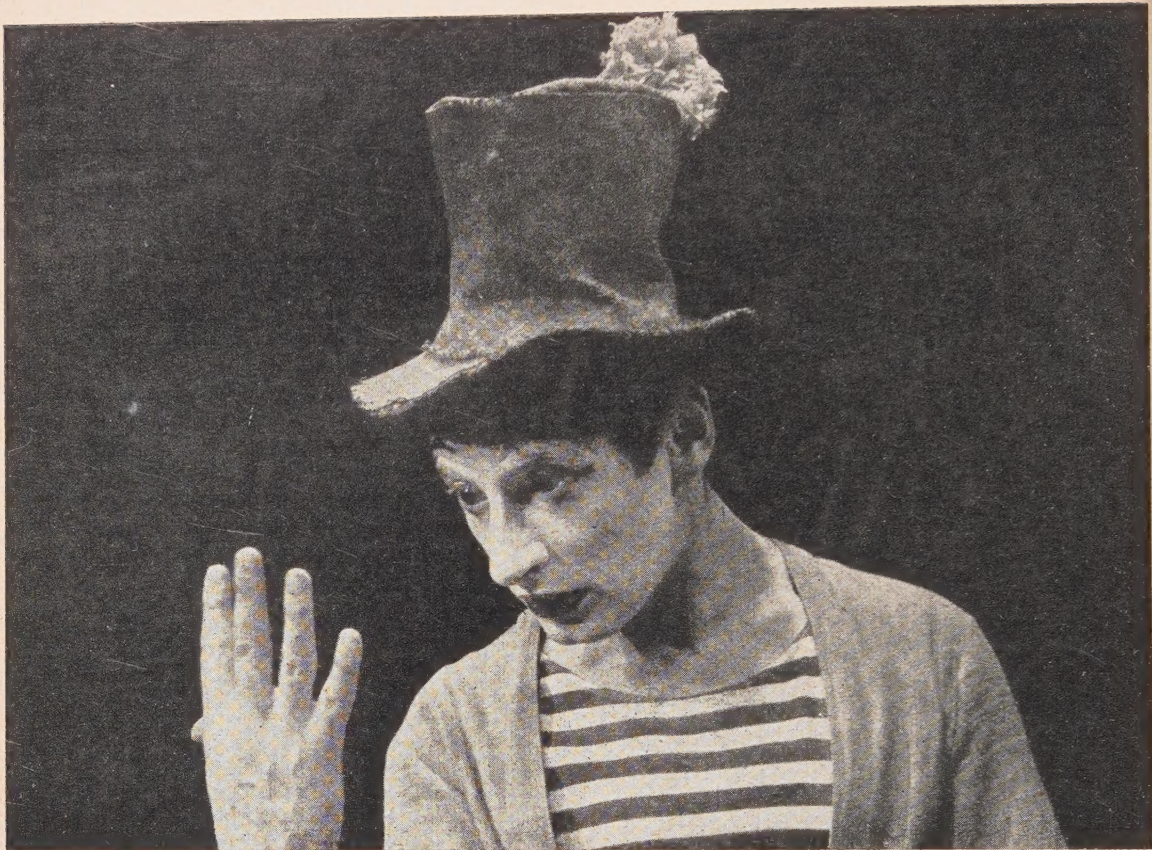
ing as he had (to use as he pleased), or we accepted the necessity of giving more performances—with an inevitable consequent softening of quality of dancing and music and choreography. When State-aid came, our ballet had already gathered in its big, popular public and—mostly unknown even to its directors and managers—was playing down to a level which was demanded by that public. (We must not overlook that much of that public's taste was being moulded by the popular literature of ballet, and the quality of English balletography has, in its general growth and over a number of years, never equalled the quality of native criticism on Drama, Poetry, Fiction and Painting.)

This public's taste could have been subtly elevated if there had been a continuous and sufficient number of new ballets by new and imaginative choreographers; if new composers had been found in sufficient numbers and new designers encouraged to think that ballet was the most tricky and the most rewarding form of theatre to work for. (We pretend that Fokine's "law" of new dance style plus new music plus new decor equal a new ballet, but remarkably few English ballets are made out of *new* dance style, *new* music and *new* decor.)

Looking back on the twenty years' history of English ballet of the 20th century, we can see where the accidents occurred that forced upon the system the (by now) bad ideas that mainly govern it. We did not set an academy standard of dance-training early enough: we failed to *invent* a way of training choreographers: no music academy tried to set up a special branch studying the special needs of theatre-music composition: too many of our directors, choreographers, critics, dancers and audiences accepted the worn-out ideas of balletic values that came down with the Russian Ballet system from the 19th century; so that Ballet is more strongly infected with the Romantic Idea than any other living art-form.

Without doubt, Mr. Guthrie has said some true things about the state of ballet; I agree that a swing of fashion must come (as it came in the last century when the 1820-1850 kind of Romantic Ballet lost popular place throughout the whole European Theatre and Grand Opera had its grand innings). The pervasive influence of ballet, though it has "softened" much dramatic production for many people's taste, has let loose the idea that belongs to the dawn of our Theatre, i.e., *all Theatre is movement*. I predict—and I'm likely to be as right, and as wrong, as Mr. Guthrie—that we shall have a unison of Modern Dance and Ballet; that there will be a gradual revival of Mime; that a combined dance-drama-musical will begin to grow up inside the next

(Continued on page 20)



Photograph by Paul Wilson

MARCEL MARCEAU IN ONE OF HIS "BIP" CHARACTERISATIONS

MARCEAU

By JANET SINCLAIR

IN considering the art of M. Marcel Marceau, the French mime appearing at the Arts Theatre for four weeks from the 30th January, the critic—be he of drama or ballet—is immediately brought up short against three stumbling blocks: the first, his own total ignorance of classic mime; the second, the fact that no mimes appear in London to serve as subjects of comparison; and in the third place, the critic has a hard task set him in restraining the flow of superlatives that rush naturally to the pen when attempting any evaluation of the performance of this superb artist.

The first half of M. Marceau's programme is devoted to studies in mime illustrating the means at his disposal, the second half to a series of sketches showing the ends to which he uses his technique in the creation of "Bip", a character of his own invention.

The curtain rises on a stage set with black curtains. In the centre, we see two figures, one posed in profile to the audience, dressed in a white coat and narrow trousers cut short at the calf, with a brown curly wig and whitened face, the other taller figure in black holding a placard on which is written

single word "Walking". The black figure melts gently into the wings as Marcel Marceau begins to move. Head thrust slightly forward, arms swinging with the motion of the body, he walks: the foot thrust out, the weight transferred and the other foot taking the weight in its turn: the shoulders, chest, thighs, knees, arms, hands follow the swing of the movement. It is not until he has taken seven or eight steps that it is borne in upon the observer that he is still at the same spot on the stage as that on which he began. While we are still trying to grasp this, the figure slows down and stiffens into immobility. Another placard: "Walking Against the Wind". The mime begins to move again and we almost see the wind pouring over him as he struggles and struggles his way through it; for the first time he turns towards the audience as he is blown off his course, arms upraised to protect his face. In these first two sketches, Marceau is content merely to demonstrate basic technique, but in the third—"The Stairs"—humour begins to creep in with the slight exaggeration of movement, the little flat-topped bump as the climber arrives on the landing, the disgusted appraisal of the height still to be climbed: and through the next sketches—the Racing Cyclists and the Tug-of-War—human foibles become increasingly superimposed upon the basic technique and we are in the clutch of helpless laughter.

The powers of observation displayed by this remarkable young man—he is 28 years old—make the attempts of everyone else we have seen in this field seem child's play. Other mimes or impressionists often rely on some specialisation to create their effect, but with Marceau every inch of his body is expressive. He has the advantage in this respect of having been trained in a highly developed technique which it must have taken him years to perfect—a technique of which we are furnished further examples in the miming of his assistant, Gilles Segal—and to this technique he has added his own impressions of human faults, failings and weaknesses and portrays them with a detachment showing not only their comic but also their lovable aspect.

If one can compare Marceau with any other artist it is with Chaplin, the greatest mime of the age. Watch him as Bip the Beggar, when his better nature gets the best of him and he gives away to a genuine kind beggar the ring dropped in his hand by a passer-by: watch his discomfiture when plagued by a bumble-bee (a section of this sketch is reminiscent of Pierrot's would-be capture of Papillon): watch his characterisation when as "Bip—King of Sports" he alternates between the big bully of a strong man and the timid, diffident little amateur: above all,

watch the multitude of varying shades of expression which chase across his face when, afflicted with a sore finger, he faces the necessity of removing the bandage and washing the sore spot.

If Marceau can render an audience almost hysterical with laughter this is not the sole extent of his powers. It is not only the comedian in him that one admires—it is also the observer who can catch the essential difference between the movements of a man walking upstairs and walking down: between the easy, loose, swinging gait of the skater, the slow-motion struggles of the man walking against the wind and the lurching of the voyager on the heaving deck of a ship. Nearly all his sketches save the purely demonstrative mime examples have an element of comedy, but when he turns to tragedy in the Japanese Pantomime or to the "Adolescence: Maturity: Old Age—Death" sequence (perhaps his most startling achievement) he is equally effective. The word genius is one of which the critic fights shy, yet one does not hesitate in applying it to Marceau unreservedly. It is some measure of his enchantment to say that at two performances at least he held the audience so completely enthralled that throughout a demonstration lasting nearly two hours not once was so much as a single cough to be heard. Any Londoner accustomed to the barrage let loose in our theatres during the months of January, February and March will appreciate this astonishing fact.

Bouquet of the Month



Our bouquet of the month is hereby presented to Gilles Segal, assistant to Marcel Marceau and himself a mime of brilliance, for the ingenious and entertaining poses with which he displays the announcements of his colleague's sketches.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

A Review of the New Production

by MARY CLARKE

THE new production of *The Sleeping Beauty* (first given on January 9th) struck me as the best Sadler's Wells have yet achieved. There are no great changes but it is obvious that much care and thought went into the staging, and the *corps de ballet* was in wonderful shape. Perhaps this was in some part due to the fact that most of the dancers in it were comparative newcomers, and for the first time for many years it was in the nature of an old-style *corps de ballet* and not a group of soloists as is the present fashion. Such dancers probably submit more happily to the ensemble work since it has not yet become a rather boring and routine job of work; but one cannot overlook or grudge praise to the expert rehearsal that must have taken place. The same care was evident in the casting, for tall boys were matched with tall girls, and the fairies' cavaliers were nicely spaced according to height for their *pas de six* in the Prologue.

Oliver Messel's costumes looked once again enchantingly fresh and light, although the hooped skirts of the Duchesses and Marchionesses seemed a little wobbly. The settings were much improved; the Vision Scene was newly designed and the other familiar settings appeared to be more boldly painted than before. The gateway to the sleeping castle was beautifully suggested and the only complaint I could find was that the fountains in Act I looked like stalagmites.

The choreography has been slightly revised. There is a new solo for the Vision of the Princess Aurora in Act II which has been arranged by Frederick Ashton. The music is yet another fragment, unfamiliar to us, from Tchaikowsky's gigantic score. The credit says "after Petipa" but the gentle lyricism of the solo seems very like Ashton at his best; it was danced with beautiful sensibility, particularly by Nerina. There is also a new solo for Prince Florimund in Act III by Ninette de Valois ("after Marius Petipa") which is slightly different for the different men who perform the role (Somes, Field and Hart), but is chiefly built on *entrechats* and *double tours*. John Field performs it admirably, but it is unremarkable as choreography.

Special mention must be made of John Sullivan's lighting which aided the production all the time and

was particularly exciting and lovely at the beginning of Act III.

Such a production survives remarkably the absence of the *prima ballerina assoluta*. There were, of course, two experienced Auroras in Beryl Grey and Violetta Elvin, while Nadia Nerina and Rosemary Lindsay were seen for the first time in London in the role. Of the four, Grey is the most assured and most at ease; she has strength and fluency and gives a performance that is consistently good though as yet it seems to lack the final touch of grandeur. Elvin's movement is all grandeur; poses and extensions have a magnificence that catches the heart. She has yet to knit all her wonderful isolated passages into a rounded whole, to give the flow of inevitability, and also to differentiate a little more between the different acts. I like her "spindle" episode best of the four and she best matches the theatrical glamour of the Rose Adagio music.

Nerina's Aurora is enchanting; it is young, joyous and radiating a delight in dancing that is immediately felt by the audience. She is the only dancer I have seen who made clear that Aurora is so bewildered by the pricking of her finger because in all her sixteen years she has never experienced a prick before. She is a born dancer and seems to have every quality to take her right to the top. Her performance as yet has all kinds of faults but one can forgive them and wait for the future.

Rosemary Lindsay's Aurora was, like all her work, sincerely felt and admirably mastered. She is a very sound dancer of musical sensibility and gentle orthodoxy. The qualities she lacks are strength of personality, real freedom of movement and originality. They are the qualities usually wanting in English dancers and the blame probably attaches as much to the training methods as to the dancers themselves.

John Hart deserves much credit for his partnering of both Nerina and Lindsay, particularly for his fine, easy-seeming lifts. None of the Florimunds make very much of the part; they are good but they do not dominate as Dolin, for example, did.

The really outstanding performance among the other roles was that given by Ray Powell as Carabosse, the wicked fairy. He does not in the least

gest a pantomime or comic figure but creates a al character, tragic as well as malevolent. One understands how bitter such a misshapen little creature would feel towards a smart and brilliant court and how vengeance might well take such a vicious form.

The other soloists were of much the same standard as we have come to expect in *The Sleeping Beauty*. Valerie Taylor and Greta Hamby, both of outstanding beauty, were welcome additions to the group of fairies. The Blue Bird *pas de deux* was never entirely satisfactory—but is it ever? Shaw has the ability but not the control or elegance; Massine and Macmillan are too soft; Vernon has no elevation to speak of. The girls do better; Elvin is exciting and Nerina charmingly feminine. The three Ivans (especially Alexander Grant) were wonderful in their not very exciting choreography and *Ass-in-Boots* and *The White Cat* regularly received more applause than all the other divertissements put together.

Fonteyn's Return

Margot Fonteyn returned to the Sadler's Wells Ballet, after nearly five months' absence, on February 9th when she danced Chloé in Ashton's *Daphnis and Chloé*. That she received an ovation goes without saying, but even in her memories of great ovations that Saturday night may have a special place. It reflected the love and homage not only of her London public, but of all the people connected with the Opera House and of the company themselves who stood applauding behind her on the stage at the end of the ballet. She returned not only to give a great performance in this most beautiful Ashton ballet, but to inspire the other dancers to heights they seldom touch when she is absent.

In her honour, perhaps, we had the rare experience of an evening when almost every leading dancer in the company performed. It made an impressive showing, for the company *at full strength* is still a very wonderful organisation—a fact we are likely to forget on some occasions.

BERYL GREY AND JOHN FIELD WITH THE CORPS DE BALLET IN THE VISION SCENE OF THE SLEEPING BEAUTY AT COVENT GARDEN. THE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS THE REVISED SETTING BY OLIVER MESSEL





ALICIA ALONSO AND MURIEL BENTLEY (THE STEPMOTHER) IN THE ORIGINAL BALLET THEATRE PRODUCTION OF
FALL RIVER LEGEND BY AGNES DE MILLE

Agnes de Mille's Approach to Choreography

By ARTHUR TODD

CREATIVE American choreographers have a variety of methods of attacking a theme and developing an idea in dance form. Readers of this magazine may recall that last November's issue carried notes on the theories of George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins, both of whom appeared on Walter Terry's lecture-demonstration series at the Y.M. & Y.W.H.A. in New York City. Later the same season, Agnes de Mille was also a guest on this series, appearing in some of her own concert numbers, also showing and explaining excerpts from her recent ballets and theatre dances with the aid of Nora Kaye, Lidja Franklin and Peter Birch.

Walter Terry introduced Agnes de Mille as an important figure in three major areas of the dance—concert, ballet and theatre, adding that Arnold Haskell had termed her "the first idiomatic American dancer". Today, as a matter of fact, de Mille's work is almost as well known in England as it is in America. This is particularly true of her ballets,

the recent *Fall River Legend* and the earlier *Rodeo*, also her theatre dances for *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel* and *Brigadoon*. Moreover, many concert-goers in Britain may recall de Mille's frequent appearances with Antony Tudor and Hugh Laing during the late '30s. (Incidentally, this period in de Mille's career is dealt with at length and most interestingly in her recently published autobiography, *Dance to the Piper*.)

Talking to Walter Terry of her earliest days, Agnes de Mille recalled, "I started out as a kind of lone wolf. All I wanted to do was to get into a ballet company and dance a mazurka in *Sylphides*. Then I began to find out what I could do that was good for me. I began piecing together to make a character and an atmosphere. I also studied the early English and French folk dances, current folk dances and that's my choreographic background." She continued: "Originally, I started on dramatic ideas and learned how to tell a story. I wanted to put a personality on the stage and reveal part of a human

ing." In explaining this Miss de Mille went on to say, "Dramatic gesture is story telling. I use a mixed style. I don't approve of it but I do it. I am to tell just stories, just people. However, there is a dramatic structure inside each dance and it has to represent the life out of which it grows. It can go as far as you want in gesture but not in meaning".

"I have a technique of work," said de Mille, "a means of getting on with it. I don't have any aesthetic convictions about what dance should be. An idea for a ballet is hard, but in a show the book, music and text suggest things to say." Discussing the similarities and differences between each of the dance forms, she added, "Basically, there's no great difference in approach to recital, ballet and theatre. In a recital you work on something to stand alone without using a full orchestra or decor. In ballet you have a bare stage, some settings, a symphony orchestra, the pick of the best dancers, and forty minutes. In the theatre you have too much scenery, quantities of singers and you're given three to four minutes to illustrate the plot of a song. You follow other kinds of extraneous people and telescope time with a result that you get a two dimensional effect." While working on her new dances which are the highlight of the current Broadway success, *Paint Your Wagon*, Miss de Mille observed, "Ever since *Oklahoma!* I have decided *where* the dances go. I have to decide *where* because *where* means *what*."

During the demonstration part of the programme Miss de Mille performed some of her earliest concert numbers and then went on to illustrate, with the aid of guest artists, what she was after in devising the dances for two of her recent theatre successes. *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* was an attempt to capture what was considered hot stuff in the 'twenties" said de Mille. In explaining the Funeral Dance in *Brigadoon* she pointed out, "It's ritualistic, also an 18th century dance. The use of the foot is the 18th century foot and it's a dance of repetition."

Talking of her ballet *Fall River Legend*, de Mille termed it, "The only thing I've done without humour. It was about a man wrestling with a woman's mind and her minister becomes a symbol of her father. The axe becomes a symbol of freedom, love, her dead mother and emancipation."

A capacity audience attended this lecture-demonstration, applauded Nora Kaye heartily, but saved their biggest demonstration for Miss de Mille herself.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, *Ballet Today*

January 24th, 1952.

Madam.

I am writing this letter as an answer to Miss Aileen Pullen, as I want you to know that there are still some members of the audience who do not approve of the growth of the legend that the Covent Garden management is infallible.

No responsible critic has ignored the company's achievements, and it is worth considering just what they have objected to. For about four years after the re-opening of Covent Garden, almost all adverse criticism was directed to points of production such as bad lighting. Another disappointment—the lack of good male dancers—was sometimes mentioned but nobody took the initiative in laying the blame for these matters where they belong.

Recently, while admitting that such difficulties were being overcome, critics have called attention to a fall in the standard of dancing. I do not see how they could have avoided doing so. I agree that we should not blame the dancers, but I believe the cause to be not bad luck but bad judgment. Obviously nothing can compensate for the absence of Fonteyn but our national company should not be disorganised to so great an extent by the absence of a few soloists. One must admire the way in which Ninette de Valois gives her dancers roles as important as their talent merits, but she has not enough soloists. This leads me to another point: there is too much of the "closed shop" about the organisation. If all Government subsidy is to be given to Sadler's Wells Ballet and companies like the Metropolitan are to be forced out of business, should not the Wells in return recruit more dancers from outside its own schools and even from other countries? An ex-Sadler's Wells dancer recently during the course of a lecture shocked me by stating that it had unfortunately not yet been possible to get a completely English company at Sadler's Wells Theatre, and they still had to take some girls from the Commonwealth. I cannot agree that such isolation is a good thing.

It seems unlikely that shortage of money restricts the size of the company, but if so could not some of the expensive failures of the last five years been avoided? The only conclusion seems to be that the company is still not large or strong enough for its very heavy responsibilities; and that the critics were justified in saying so. It is, of course, regrettable if such criticism breaks soloists' hearts instead of making the management's ears burn. I am, Madam,

Yours faithfully,

KEITH M. AKESTER.

SOME BRITISH



LEFT

STEPHEN, SON OF JOHN GREGORY
AND BARBARA VERNON

RIGHT

PATRICK ANTHONY, SON OF ANNE
SUREN AND PETER WHITE, WITH
HIS MOTHER

BELOW

PAINTON COWAN, SON OF PAMELA
MAY



LEFT

PIERA SUE BREEDEN, DAUGHTER OF
JUNE BRAE

RIGHT

ALEXANDRA, DAUGHTER OF LEO
KERSLEY



ALLET BABIES



LEFT

JEAN AND MICHAEL LEONIDE MAC-
LEAN, CHILDREN OF ANDRE CORDOVA

RIGHT

SOLVEIG, DAUGHTER OF HAROLD
TURNER AND GERD LARSEN, WITH
HER MOTHER

BELOW

DOMINIQUE, DAUGHTER OF JOHN
FIELD



LEFT

CHRISTOPHER, SON OF JULIA
FARRON AND ALFRED RODRIGUES

RIGHT

SIMON WYNN, SON OF SALLY GIL-
MOUR

SOME REFLECTIONS ON STYLE

By JAY NORMAN

RECENT performances by Violetta Elvin in many of the ballerina and solo roles in the repertoire of the Sadler's Wells Ballet have reinforced my opinion that the hallmark of dancers trained in the Soviet Ballet Schools, so far as we can judge from our limited knowledge, is an impressive plastic eloquence. By plastic is meant "giving form" and by plastic eloquence a projection of emotion through form. Elvin has only to rest her head on her fluid arm to give a plastic image of tragedy, or to fling wide her arms to communicate her joy. Her *Odette* and *Odile* in *Les Lac des Cygnes* illustrate this most clearly. Because she conveys character in terms of plastic imagery, through the choreography, she conclusively persuades one she is the same woman in Acts II and III. No wonder Siegfried is deceived! (Are not her arms the same? Do not her shoulders, indeed her whole body, move in the same manner?) Such movement is as expressive and as moving as great sculpture.

In her own country, of course, Elvin would be one of a group of young ballerinas, all trained in this same school. Here she must necessarily be regarded as a unique artist and, tentative as are many of her interpretations as yet, there is no doubt that she has a quality of movement which is possessed by few of our own dancers.

Perhaps a comparison of *Ballet Imperial* with *Symphonic Variations* gives a good idea of the difference not only between two utterly different styles of choreography but between Elvin, a gifted example of the Soviet School, and Fonteyn, the highest product of that typically English compromise, an English environment and the methods of Russian, French and Italian teachers. (Though it would be as well to remember that the Russian school itself developed from equally mixed sources.)

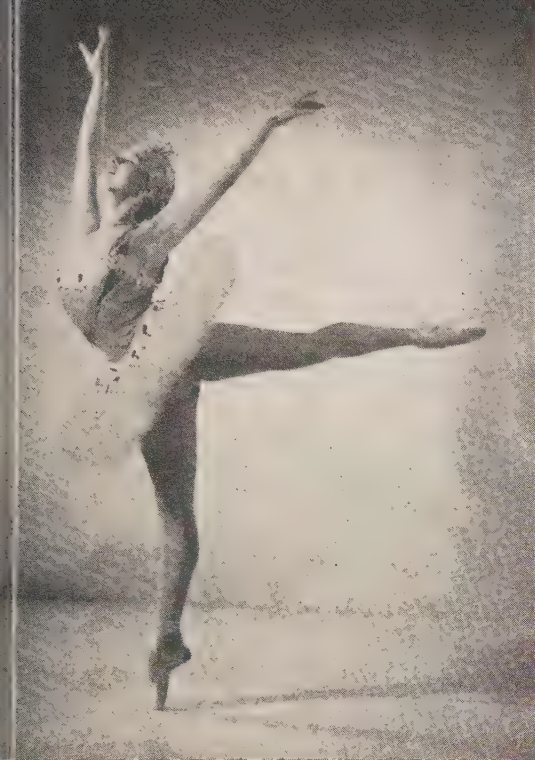
In *Ballet Imperial* Elvin has found a role that fits her like a glove. In its creation Balanchine (a product also of the Russian school) deliberately exploited the style of Imperial Russia, adding typical modern touches of his own. This role, therefore, requires style of a particular kind. For example, the first entrance of the ballerina, with its weaving torso and arm movements, demands a particular plastic quality; the promenade with her cavalier requires an authority of carriage derived, at least in part, from a consciously felt tradition of greatness and nobility. Elvin, an heir by training to this tradition, is not surprisingly the most successful dancer at Sadler's Wells in the ballet.

Symphonic Variations, with Fonteyn, becomes a lyric, a poem in which emotion and music have become one; with Elvin it is a living dramatic frieze, completely irrelevant to this particular music. Fonteyn's strength is in the perfection of her classical restraint and in an expression of mood which is as an inner compulsion expressing itself through a kind of withheld emotion, at least as much as through plastic imagery. It is as well to remember, however, that Fonteyn is unique, and the spiritual quality which gives a special significance to her work is entirely her own.

The restraint, dignity and awareness of style apparent in Fonteyn, are qualities shared in a lesser degree by the majority of English dancers as also to some extent is the expression of mood, a quality probably fostered by the necessity to appear in dramatic roles before physical maturity, but where it does not exist there is little plastic eloquence to replace it.

Beryl Grey is an outstanding exception. While possessing many of the typical qualities of the English dancer, her generous and sincere personality, exceptionally strong technique and innate musical sense have helped her to develop an extension of movement and a plasticity of body few dancers can equal today. The young Beriosova, also trained in the Russian school, has a similar breadth and eloquence of movement.

These reflections lead naturally to a consideration of the future of ballet in this country since it can obviously only survive if dancers of sufficient calibre are available and if choreographers of ideas are forthcoming to use this material adventurously. The Diaghilev heritage is wearing thin and we cannot exploit it indefinitely. We could not, even if we wished, imitate Soviet teaching methods slavishly; our dancers have different temperaments and physiques and it has not yet, I think, been conclusively proved that this style, ideal as it is for the Russian "classics", is best suited to modern work. Fonteyn will not be with us for ever and Grey's style is entirely her own; Elvin and Beriosova we may cherish but cannot claim. It is not inspiring to visualise a future without them and one built merely on English restraint, dignity and awareness of style. The best hope for the future seems to be that here and there teachers and students are working on the development of plastic expression towards the evolution of a new style, though one still based on a sound classical foundation and the native talent.



Photograph by Baron

VIOLETTA ELVIN IN BALLET IMPERIAL

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET MEET CHAPLIN

Dear Janet,

What an exciting and hectic last week we had in Los Angeles. On the Sunday night, December 30th, Eugene Loring, choreographer of *Billy the Kid*, invited the Company out to his dancing school on Hollywood Boulevard for a party, which was voted among ourselves to be one of the best parties of the tour to date. Many of Mr. Loring's students were there, and many theatre people, including Lena Horne and her daughter, Constantine the photographer, André Eglevsky and Melissa Hayden. The first-mentioned two dancers told us that they were working on a film with Chaplin.

Every night the audience included many movie stars; the company danced very well and received much praise in the Press. On our free day that week

there were invitations from the film studios to watch shooting on the sets: most of the principals went to M.G.M. Studios, others went to visit Warner Brothers, while six of us including myself were invited to visit Chaplin, who was filming at the R.K.O. Pathe studios in Culver City.

On arrival we were introduced to Mr. Chaplin's publicity men, who took us to Stage II, where the film was being shot. We entered what appeared to be an old theatre; in the auditorium a few stalls remained to either side while the middle was taken up with camera trolleys surrounded by a mass of technicians. In the director's seat was Chaplin himself, white haired with horn-rimmed glasses, dressed very casually in well-worn clothes. We sat down at the side out of the way and looked at the stage, set with a decor rather reminiscent of the second act of *Giselle* complete with tombstone. On the stage André Eglevsky was practising a few steps, and soon Melissa Hayden in practise clothes and make-up came up to us in the stalls and talked to us. If I may say so without sounding too American—Gee! What a nice kid! Eventually the cameras were ready and we watched Eglevsky dance his solos: he repeated them three times in the course of the morning and every time a solo ended he was warmly applauded by everyone.

Eglevsky also has a mime sequence in this film: it was a wonderful experience to watch Chaplin show him how it should be done, for he did it so beautifully and with such poetry of feeling that a quiet descended over the usually noisy set.

At the end of the morning's shooting, Chaplin came over and talked to us for some time, saying how much he had enjoyed our performances and adding that he felt himself to be a natural dancer and loved the ballet. At various times during the morning while the music was playing and the set being prepared he tried several steps, including pirouettes, especially for our amusement. At last we regretfully said goodbye, and after lunch with all the film folk in a cafe on the studio grounds we set off for Los Angeles, rehearsals, and the closing performances of a very successful ten-day season. Saturday night found hosts of friends at the station to see us off to Texas.

We played one show at San Antonio, Texas, on Monday, January 7th, and then went on to Waco, Houston and Dallas. Elaine was off for most of the week with a back sprain, but came back on the Friday night in Dallas for *Swan Lake*. We were well received everywhere in Texas and Danilova spoke very well of the performances she saw in Dallas.

From Dallas we went to Shreveport, and then on to Little Rock and Springfield, arriving in Kansas

City at about seven o'clock in the morning on the Thursday. That night we opened with *Coppelia*, danced by Maryon Lane and Donald Britton, and glowing accounts appeared in the papers next day. On the Sunday we went on to Chicago (January 20th) a little nervous of our opening there the next day, but pleased at the prospect of settling down for a week which was beginning to be necessary after the continual travelling. We opened with *Casse Noisette* which was well received by a large and very smart audience: they did not seem to care quite so much for *Prospect*, although they liked Stanley, and Poll

went down very well. The notices next day were eagerly scanned—and they were good ones. On Tuesday we gave *Coppelia*, with Svetlana and Blair both on top of their form, earning high praise and a real ovation. After the performance we went to a party at the British Consul's. Throughout the week we had good houses and fine press notices, and all made many friends in the city, and are sorry to leave. Tomorrow we go to St. Louis, and it's late as usual, so I'll say goodbye for now.

Sincerely, MICHAEL HOGAN.



Photograph by Paul Wilson

JUNE BRAE AS THE LILAC FAIRY AND HAROLD TURNER AS THE PRINCE IN THE TELEVISION PRODUCTION OF THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

TELEVISION SURVEY by LISA GORDON-SMITH

A FEW months ago, fresh from the pleasure of watching Christian Simpson's expert production of Pilar Lopez and her dancers on television, I wrote that he had yet to show us that he can do as much with the classical ballet.

His mammoth production of *The Sleeping Beauty* on January 11th leaves the situation unchanged, for the two programmes were in no way comparable.

Sleeping Beauty had nothing but size to commend it, and on a television screen size is no commendation.

What audiences unaccustomed to ballet made of the whole thing it is difficult to imagine; they probably found it confusing. Even to balletomanes, although their knowledge of the ballet enabled them to follow the story, there was still a great deal of optical confusion.

The adaptation for the medium was, like the rate's Egg, "excellent in parts". The shadow bats, in instance, which marked the entry and departure Carabosse (portrayed with cunning malice by chel de Lutry) were an excellent idea, permitting the elimination of the various small creepy-crawlies which normally surround her skirts. Less fortunate is the cutting out of the beautiful Spindle Variants; instead of this, Carabosse planted herself, armed with a complete spinning-wheel, in a corner of the Courtyard.

The music, also, left much to be desired. That the tunes were played with reasonable accuracy and tempo is the most that can be said for it. The magic of Tchaikovsky's score was conspicuously absent; the fanfare heralding the arrival of Royalty could not have sounded less excited if it had been announcing the fat stock prices.

Even the dancing was disappointing. June Brae's Mac Fairy, although charming, did not inspire the confidence expected from one who is controlling the fate of a Nation, nor did she dance outstandingly well. Lycette Darsonval is a far from ideal Aurora; surely someone as suitable could have been found nearer home with less trouble and expense?

Notable for giving their best in the circumstances are Harold Turner as the Prince, Xavier Andreani and Nicole Amigue as Bluebird and the Enchanted Princess, and Leonard Boucher and Marjorie Woodams from the feline world.

On January 23rd the first programme of three in the third *Ballet for Beginners* series showed once more that it is better to present a little ballet well than a big ballet badly.

Felicity Gray, that charming commentator and script-writer, coped adequately with the difficulties of steering a clear course between old viewers who had seen the series twice and new viewers who had only heard about it.

The analysis of *Les Sylphides* was clear and interesting and brought out points which must have been new to most people who have not actually danced the ballet. Philip Bate produced with the maximum of balletic taste and the minimum of fuss, and Eileen Callaghan (how beautifully she walks on stage or set!) and Michel de Lutry led the dancers. The latter also "staged" the performance of the ballet for screen purposes.

It is a welcome thought that a similar analysis of the two acts of *Giselle* is to follow, but need this very popular series be limited to three programmes?

New York Notebook

THE New York City Ballet's last season before their European tour started on February 12th and continues until March 16th at the City Centre. As usual, a lot of new ballets are scheduled. These include Frederick Ashton's long-awaited *Picnic at Tintagel* ballet to Sir Arnold Bax's "Garden of Fand", for which Cecil Beaton is to design the scenery and costumes. Antony Tudor is working on his ballet to three Beethoven overtures, provisionally entitled *La Gloire*, which is for Nora Kaye, Hugh Laing and Francisco Moncion. Balanchine's contributions will be *Bayou* set to Virgil Thompson's "Arcadian Songs and Dances" (composed for the film *Louisiana Story*), with scenery and costumes by Dorothea Tanning, and *Divertissement Classique* to Mozart's *Divertimento No. 15*, with costumes "designed by Christian Berard for an earlier Mozart ballet". This is being substituted for the Strauss *Don Juan* which Balanchine abandoned as he found the music insufficient for the story. The premiere was on February 19th. Jerome Robbins will contribute one new ballet, *Ballade*, with Debussy music and scenery and costumes by Boris Aronson.

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The name "Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet" is still causing confusion in America in spite of all the advance explanation and publicity. During Ballet Theatre's recent Chicago season people were actually referring to the company as the "Sadler's Wells Ballet Theatre" and Claudia Cassidy, the *Tribune* critic, swears that after Youskevitch had danced superbly the man sitting behind her intoned majestically "That's the world's greatest male dancer: that's Michael Somes." In desperation, Chicago finally dubbed the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet the "Don't-Call-Me-Junior" Company and left it at that!

* * *

There will be two Pavlovas appearing on the screen later this year or early next. Tamara Toumanova has been signed to play the ballerina in the film that 20th Century Fox are making of the life of impresario Sol Hurok which is to be called *Tonight We Sing*. Meanwhile M.G.M. are filming the life of Annette Kellerman, the famous Australian swimmer, who became a star in the early days of the cinema. Needless to say, Esther Williams is playing this part. The film includes an authentic incident of Annette Kellerman appearing at a variety theatre and watching in tears from the wings while Anna Pavlova dances on the stage. This Pavlova will be impersonated by Maria Tallchief.

Festival Ballet

FESTIVAL Ballet will be in London at the Stoll Theatre for a five or six week season starting late in March. Alicia Markova will not be with them as she is at present in America resting and has been told by her doctors that she must not dance for another three or four months. In her place the company will have a prima ballerina guest artiste, probably Tamara Toumanova.

During the season the company's production of *Sheherazade*, which they gave for the first time in Monte Carlo during their Christmas season, will have its London premiere. A new ballet by David Lichine set to Vivaldi's Concerto Grosso in D Minor will also be given and there may be another new ballet before the end of the season.

Sonia Arova, who had such a personal success with the Original Ballet Russe, has now joined the company. She was formerly a member of the Ballets des Champs Elysees and will, of course, also be remembered in this country for her dancing in the International and Rambert companies. Another newcomer to Festival Ballet will be 22-year-old Oleg Briansky. Briansky's career began in his native Brussels and at the age of sixteen, in 1946, he was invited to join the Ballets des Champs Elysees. He danced in the *corps de ballet* of that company during their memorable first London season in 1946, and eventually danced many of the leading roles. In 1951 he went to New York with Petit's Ballets de Paris and when the company disbanded he danced on Broadway and television in New York. He was with Festival Ballet in Monte Carlo where he had considerable success.

At the end of their London season Festival Ballet will continue their tour of the provinces. The dates for this tour will be announced later.

A Swedish Opera Ballet Film

Some glimpses of the Swedish ballet in its own Royal Opera House at Stockholm will be afforded in a film now being made in Sweden called *The Fire Bird*. This is to be a combination of opera and ballet in the manner of *Tales of Hoffmann*, in colour, but with specially composed music for the film. The Italian baritone, Mr. Tito Gobbi, has been engaged to sing one of the leading roles and the dancers will be Ellen Rasch, ballerina of the Stockholm Royal Opera, Bjorn Holmgren (who has been seen in England with International Ballet) and the Opera *corps de ballet*. The spoken dialogue will be in English.

New Fields for Dancing

The authors of this article are young teachers with somewhat unorthodox ideas about methods of dance training. Without necessarily agreeing with their conclusions, we think they deserve a hearing. Louis Conrad has worked at the Sigurd Leeder School of Modern Dance and John Broome at the Sadler's Wells Ballet School; they base their ideas on a knowledge of both styles of dancing, and quote occasionally from the American critic John Martin.

LONDON dance audiences have seen much; absorbed much; and rejected much; and although there may be differences of opinion the broadening of a critical faculty has become noticeable, possibly because the audiences of today have been given the opportunity to see a much wider range of dance-styles than ever before. Ballet, Modern, Folk-Dance, Indian, Latin-American, Spanish, Negro and Caribbean Dance have followed each other in quick succession, and this has aroused the dance-consciousness of the people to such an extent that they no longer wish to remain merely spectators but actually take an active participation in the many Amateur-Classes, Ballet Clubs and Evening Institute Courses now becoming increasingly available throughout London.

There is also a reflection of this fact amongst professional dancers in that they are beginning to acknowledge a wider field of dance, and completely new ground which is being explored now holds their earnest attention.

We as teachers are in a favourable position to see this growing change; we see in it a new hope—since it is now realised that every style of dance must be judged in its own light and not in the light of another, and since the sight of the unfamiliar in dance now awakens an intelligent interest and not a complete denial, we treasure the hope that these new fields of dance—and consequently new fields of dance-training will be given the same opportunity.

In considering a "new" field we must remember that it is not new in the sense that it has just been discovered—great reformers of the past have stated what an ideal dance training should be (but no true workable system has yet been evolved which has kept strictly to their ideas). The problem of how to make the body expressive and not purely gymnastic had proved to be the greatest stumbling block.

Why is this? Is this problem insurmountable today? Is it because we have the opportunity at this time in the evolution of dance to appreciate the heritage of ideas that has been left to us, that present reformers are enabled to work from these ideas and so proceed towards its realisation. Unfortunately, however, many teachers of today seem to be oblivious even to the existence of these facts, which is indeed surprising since it is these very facts which lie at the root of the whole matter.

When we are to review the situation in an intelligent way we are bound to discover that a dance-training which aims only at mere muscle development must be immediately disqualified as a true system. It is obvious that exercises which through continual repetition enlarge only muscles soon become associated with no other function and result in movement that is emotionally barren and the very reverse of expressive. "The dancer's habit of moving must be such that the movement is never an end in itself but always the outward result of an inner awareness." However, although the methods outlined above are to be ruled out owing to their rigid and stereotyped character this does not imply that methods directly contrary to these are to be used, for this would lead only into that field of self-expression beloved by the exponents of the so-called 'Pure Dance'. "Obviously, the exercises by which the dancer builds his bodily technique must consist accordingly of movements drawn out of himself as responses to emotional stimuli, but calculated at the same time to extend his physical capacity along all the required gymnastic lines."

One who does not merely state the problem but actually gives an inkling of how this physical capacity may be brought about in complete accord with an

"inner approach". It is from this inner approach that we build our whole technique, and practical experiments to date have turned what would first appear to be only a glib phrase into a truly workable method.

Inherent within this problem of how to make the body thoroughly expressive is the understanding of the relationship between Mime and Dance. When this relationship is admitted then we have the beginnings of a foundation from which to build. There is no other subject about which so much nonsense has been talked and none which has been transformed into such a hobgoblin to frighten away the artist. It is because of this that Mime has often been misused in both Drama and the Dance. The oft-heard cry in the past and more so today that the Drama needs more 'action' and the Dance more 'content' is an inevitable outcome of this state of affairs and has led to the misconception that Mime is a separate Art.

Space here, however, does not admit a discussion of the methods which we use, but we must remember that not all types of dance employ movement creatively in this manner. In spite of the fact that this is the root of the whole Art, in all periods and in all arts crystallisations of method and vocabulary occur which gradually grow so habitual for one reason or another that they become laws in themselves and tend to supersede creative experience. At the other end of the scale there lies the danger of pure self-expression carried to the borders of emotional debauchery and resulting in formlessness and incoherence. Between these two extremes there lies the happy medium, a medium where creativeness and coherence are bound together in a complete technique without any loss to either side.

LOUIS CONRAD.

JOHN BROOME.



THIS ACTION PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL WILSON IS OF BERT STIMMEL'S MODERN DANCE WORK SUNDOWN, WHICH WAS PRODUCED AT BALLET WORKSHOP IN JANUARY AND REPEATED IN THE FEBRUARY PROGRAMMES. THE DANCERS ARE ELIZABETH SHELLEY, PAT MC-LAUCHLAN AND ELEANOR FAZAN AND THE DECOR AND SIMPLE COSTUMES ARE BY BERTRAM TYRER

LONG AFTER PETIPA

or the need for Dance Notation

By JANET SINCLAIR and LEO KERSLEY.

ONE of the most striking facts about the mentality of those who run ballet companies on the Continent of Europe today is undoubtedly their complete indifference to the question of dance notation—Noverre's "choreography". To the minds of the present writers, the development and adoption of a system of dance notation is of the most urgent and immediate necessity if the art of ballet is to be relieved of the drudgery incurred in its practice by every dancer. At least half the backbreaking work, irritation and senseless repetition making up the dancer's life in the rehearsal room would thus be eliminated: no more arguing about this or that step when ballets are rehearsed and revived, arguments about this or that accentuation, this or that bar of music: and dancers and audience alike would be saved the maddening irritation of seeing ballets spoiled or altered by forgetful choreographers or—still more frequently—by insensitive ballet masters and mistresses who have forgotten, are without ear, or seek to "improve" upon the works of their betters.

How rewarding it would be to see a revival of a Fokine ballet exactly as Karsavina and Nijinsky originally created it: how delightful to see a hideous mutilation presented to our horrified gaze and credited to Petipa or Ivanov forbidden by copyright law, as can be done in the case of operas. Nowadays in ballet there is nothing whatever to prevent anyone who can ingratiate himself with a foolish management from "improving" and changing immortal masterpieces in a manner that would cause a general howling outcry should a parallel case arise in the musical world—imagine a modern musician having the temerity to re-orchestrate *The Shepherd on the Rock*, or to rearrange the arias in *La Traviata* using modern harmonisation. Shakespeare in basic English, or rewritten by Hemingway, would cause a qualm to anyone with a sense of poetry or the theatre: yet simultaneous outrages are perpetrated almost daily in the ballet theatre, and their originators go unhung.

A system of notation would soon stop this. Dancers could learn their roles and their musical cues from the book, and the ballet master would return to his place—not as second-rate choreographer with a free hand to mutilate others' work, but as a producer and prompter to suggest and help interpreta-

tion and technical difficulties, as a coach helps the opera singer prepare for a role.

There is another more telling point to be made here. Bella and Samuel Spewack can have a go at *The Taming of the Shrew* without having any effect on the essential Shakespeare for there he is on the page for anyone to read. Ballets, however, live only in the memories of the dancers and choreographers—and occasionally, however much the ballet master may deny it, in the eye of the audience—and once an *enchainement* arranged by Petipa vanishes from the stage, it is gone for ever. This state of affairs must put a serious strain on the young choreographer. Every artist must build on the past, and must learn from the difficulties overcome by his predecessors: but soon, if the current rage for "doing-over" Petipa (and even Fokine) does not cease, there will be nothing from which the young choreographer can work.

Fortunately, there are a few choreographers of today who realise the importance of notation: Balanchine is one, Jooss another. However, Balanchine has no scruples about re-working past masterpieces, and Jooss works without the rigid framework of the classical ballet. Many other choreographers have their own individual shorthand: but what is needed is an extension of interest in a system of notation which is clearly legible to every dancer. Only in this way can there be any hope for some sort of stabilisation of the erratic performances too often presented today, and only from stable foundations can some sort of step forward be made, for masters learn by example; and unless choreographers can study masterpieces of the past as can composers, painters and writers, ballet will never rise above the status of a minor art.

A. V. Coton (Continued from page 5)

decade . . . certainly ballet will lose the wide popularity it has had for so long, because it will continue to live only by continuing to change, and the changes are as certainly on the way as is tomorrow's dawn. The bell is ringing already, and it is not necessarily a death-knell; it may well be a triumphal peal for the dawning kind of Dance-and-Music Theatre that can, in the long run, keep all the best ideas in our ballet system alive.

Balletomane's Bookshelf

THE BALLET ANNUAL, Sixth Issue. Edited by Arnold L. Haskell. A. & C. Black, London (25s. net).

This year's *Ballet Annual* is far and away the best of the series; in layout and in content it seems to have achieved at last the goal to which the earlier volumes were reaching. The layout makes more varied use of different size type and thereby manages to get in even more material than usual. The photographs are fewer and better, and there are no messy montage effects. Gordon Antony's contributions, in particular, are the best work he has done in years.

In previous volumes I have often grudged space devoted to articles which had but passing interest; this year I would not willingly part with a single contribution. Arnold Haskell's own review of the year is masterly in its brevity, wit and wisdom: he speaks more sense on Spanish dancing than any other English critic. I am sorry there was no room

for him to write on Beriosova's *Swanilda* or Elvin's *Lac des Cygnes*, but if he reported every "press night" of the 1950-51 season he would need the whole book.

Anatole Chujoy's profile of four great opera houses is a delight, and so are Lidova's "Deux Visages". Scott Goddard writes on "Ravel's Daphnis et Chloé" and Pierre Michaut is quite fascinating on "Famous Libraries of the Dance in France". In addition there is the usual fine coverage of ballet in America and France by Ann Barzel and Maurice Pourchet respectively.

It is tragic to realise how many great pioneers have this year been lost to Ballet, yet the *Annual* warmly conveys the Editor's faith in the future. Perhaps the most moving section of the book is Cyril Beaumont's modest account of "Forty Years' Writing on the Ballet". In this he quietly records that by now, at the age of sixty, he has published just over sixty works on the art of dancing. For himself, he says, he can be content now with Carlyle's axiom: "Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness." I hope that in his heart, however, he realises that we who have profited so much from his labours count ourselves also blessed.

MARY CLARKE.



PAUL HANSEN'S CHARMING PHOTOGRAPH (LEFT) IS OF A SCENE FROM WALTER CAMRYN'S ALICE IN WONDERLAND WHICH WAS PRODUCED BY THE STONE-CAMRYN BALLET IN CHICAGO RECENTLY. THE MUSIC WAS ADAPTED FROM ROSSINI'S SCORE OF LA CERENTOLA AND ALL THE DANCERS CAME FROM CAMRYN'S ADVANCED CHARACTER CLASS IN HIS SCHOOL. PICTURED HERE ARE (LEFT TO RIGHT): PATRICK HEIM AND GILDO DI NUNZIO AS TWEEDLEDEE AND TWEEDLEDUM AND JOAN EHEMANN AS ALICE



Photograph by Renoux

DOLORES STARR IN SKIBINE'S BALLET "PRISONER OF THE CAUCASUS" WHICH RECEIVED MUCH PRAISE DURING THE RECENT PARIS SEASON OF THE GRAND BALLET DU MAQUIS DE CUEVAS

Paris Notes

The most important collection of books, drawings, and souvenirs previously belonging to the Archives Internationales de la Danse, is to be donated by M. Rolf de Mare to the Museum of the Opera House, Paris.

* * *

The body of Vaslav Nijinsky is to be taken to Paris and buried in the Cemetery of Montmartre beside the grave of Armand Vestris.

* * *

Igor Stravinsky will be in Paris in May, for the first time in thirteen years. He will conduct three concerts, and also conduct for the Paris performances of the New York City Ballet. The arrival of this company in Paris, where it will appear at the Theatre des Champs Elysees, is awaited with intense interest; their six performances will be made up of those ballets danced to Stravinsky's scores.

* * *

Jacqueline Moreau has joined the Grand Ballet du

Marquis de Cuevas and will probably take over many of the roles previously danced by Marjorie Tallchief (Mrs. George Skibine) who is expecting a baby. Vladimir Skouratoff is also reported to have joined the company. The company played a long season at Cannes after their Christmas visit to Tunis and David Lichine is staging for them a new ballet, *La Belle Epoque*, to Offenbach music. Anna Ricarda is also planning a new ballet for the company, provisionally entitled *Inez de Castro*. The company has a spring tour in Belgium, Holland and Scandinavia and is negotiating for a South American tour this summer.

NEWS COLUMN

We hear that Ram Gopal has signed a contract to play in *White Blood*, a film to be directed by Ken Annakin telling a story of an English planter and his family in Malaya. Exteriors and location work for the film are at present taking place in Ceylon and Singapore.

* * *

Pigeon Crowle, author of the popular biography of Moira Shearer, is at work on a new biography of Sadler's Wells ballerina Beryl Grey, which Messrs. Faber & Faber will publish later in the year.

* * *

Rumour has it that Paul Godkin, the American dancer whom English audiences will remember for his exciting dancing with Ballet Theatre in *Interplay* and *Fancy Free*, sails for Europe shortly to appear in a new revue. Unfortunately our informant omitted to mention which capital city Mr. Godkin was bound for. If it should be the Paris show already announced to feature Maurice Chevalier and Colette Marchand with choreography by Jerome Robbins we prophesy that many ballet lovers will be making mathematical calculations with a weather eye open for the next pronouncement by Mr. Butler.

* * *

Jane Shore is to appear as leading dancer in a new British musical featuring Jimmy Edwards and Dick Bentley. Jane Shore is well-known to London and provincial audiences for her intelligent and versatile performances when a leading dancer of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, which she joined in its early days. Her first creation was in John Cranko's first ballet for that company, *Adieu*, and she also danced the leading role in his *Children's Corner*. Her other

important roles were in *La Fete Etrange*, as the Pre-Dancer in *Les Sylphides*, and the Debutante in *Maide*.

Eighteen months ago she was transferred to the *Opéra de ballet* at Covent Garden, where she danced with charm and distinction, but never succeeded in securing leading roles.

* * *

Franklin White, whose book *Sadler's Wells Ballet Overseas Abroad*, is selling very well both here and in the U.S.A., is at work on another book. The subject, we understand, is closely connected with ballet.

* * *

A leg injury suffered by Renee Jeanmaire has delayed further the Hans Andersen film for which Mira Shearer was originally signed. It is also understood that Jeanmaire is having to work overtime to learn English. Eric Bruhn, the Danish dancer, has been signed to dance with her and has been on leave of absence from Ballet Theatre to make a film. Roland Petit, who is doing the choreography, was in Paris recently to discuss settings with the Danish artist Antoni Clave.

* * *

Madame Rambert became a grandmother in mid-February when her daughter (Lulu Dukes) gave birth to a son, Andrew. Mother and son are doing splendidly and grandmere Rambert is looking younger than ever.

* * *

The University of Leeds is to confer on Margot Fonteyn the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. The degree will be conferred during the summer term on the Princess Royal who is Chancellor of the University.

* * *

The Sadler's Wells Ballet will be in Portugal during April and is to dance at the San Carlos Theatre, Lisbon, from April 15th-23rd, and at the Rivoli Theatre, Oporto, from April 25th-28th. Eighteen performances will be given, in all, and the entire company (68 people) is flying to Lisbon.

* * *

G. B. L. Wilson has signed a contract to write the Penguin Dictionary of Ballet, of about 100,000 words, using the work on a rough draft prepared by the late Deryck Lynham.

Prix Rene Blum

At a meeting of the Association des Ecrivains et Critiques de la Danse in Paris on February 16th, the

first award of the Prix René Blum was made to Xenia Palley, a young dancer of 19 who has been seen in London with the Cuevas Ballet.

The Prix, originated by Mr. Cyril Beaumont as a memorial to René Blum, is intended as a recognition and reward each year of "un jeune danseur, une jeune danseuse, débutants, pour ses qualités, à la fois, de technique et d'expression." As the Prix is a monetary one and is the annual income of the funds accumulated for this purpose it follows that the greater the funds the larger the prize. If any admirers of the late René Blum wish to make any donation to the funds, such donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged. They can be sent to Monsieur Pierre Michaut, President, Associations des Ecrivains et Critiques de la Danse, 58 rue de Paris, Boulogne-sur-Seine (Seine), France, or to Cyril W. Beaumont, 75 Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2.

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